Mid - Florida Atari Computer Club Bulletin

January, 1994 Vol. 11, No.1

This is the monthly bulletin of the Mid-Florida Atari Computer Club. In it are articles written or submitted by members who feel they are of interest to all users of Atari computers.

You may wish to join a computer club to share the beneficial aspects of having others around you who have similar machines, like interests, and a desire to share what they know with others. A users group can help you understand things about your computer that they have already discovered.

Our membership, at $12.00 per year, entitles you to the newsletter, access to the disk libraries, and club meetings where all the fun and education happen on a monthly basis.

We meet in the Orlando Library building downtown Orlando, 101 E Central Blvd. At 1:30PM on the second Sunday of each month. Feel free to join us there next month to learn more about the wonderful world of computers, and Atari computers in particular.

For Newsletter Exchange

M.F.A.C.C.
C/O Bob Smith
3729 Yosemite Dr.
Orlando, FL 32818

M.F.A.C.C. Affiliated BBS Listing:

Top Gun	381-5403
Starbase 1	381-2610
Inner Core	294-5183
Atari Attic	521-7357

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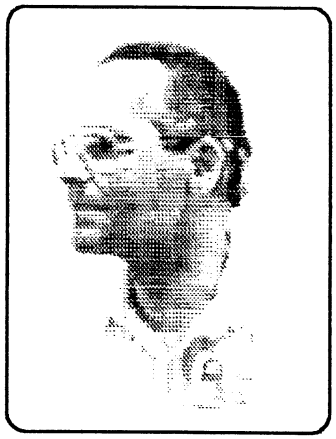
Happy New Year 1994

MID-FLORIDA ATARI COMPUTER CLUB

From The President



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The New Year has arrived, the Tax forms are in the mail and this is the first month of the New Year. (Startling revelation, isn't it?)

You will notice that this month's Newsletter has a mixture of articles covering the past year in review and several covering the future. I would encourage all of you to look very closely at them, as they are thought provoking, incisive and to the point. Now for a little year end review of my own.

This past year we have had several new members join us and in doing so, we still see that there IS NEW BLOOD out there in Atari world. One of our NEW members did an outstanding job in demo'ing his new Jaguar. Atari is on the cutting edge with this machine and it is my fervent hope that they will continue to persue the expansion of the machine and stay on top. We had Falcon Demo's and also a very good multi-networked 8 Bit setup, using four separate 8 Bit Computers and an interactive real time game. This game was perfected and demonstrated by Jeff Potter.

Art Averrett put together a successful Pizza Party. Mid-Florida Atari Computer Club moved into and renewed it's lease for new quarters at the Downtown Public Library. As a result, we have lost a few attendees and gained others.

Our St Librarian, Rick Sava, has redone the Library program and is making it better. Our 8 bit librarian will be doing the same.

There is a good deal to learn from the past year's activities, but perhaps the most important lesson is that our Atari Community is still alive and kicking, in spite of the fact, that some would have you believe otherwise. We still have members from all over the State with ages ranging from the teens to the eightys. This, in of itself, gives me hope that we will continue to persevere.

Ok, enough of that and let me just say one more thing:

To everyone and the very best and healthiest of years to you!!!!!

Minutes Of The M.F.A.C.C. General Meeting

December 1993

With an opening GONG of December 12,1993 13:40 or 20 to 2pm Bob passed out information on the CITE program provided by Jim Porter. After a short discussion we moved onto the news that Atari Corp. said they will donate game machines to the shut in children program.

Bob made the statement that the surveys need to be turned in so we can publish the results in the newsletter..

On a brighter note, ideas were discussed on having more parties and get-togethers. Hopefully we can get a committee to run this and come up with semi-annual parties????

AEO & ST Report online magazines can be made available to non-BBS users from Bob. He says he will print the table of contents on hard copy so a user can decide if they want that issue.

A new ATARI magazine is going to be printed but Bruce Cook made the suggestion that we should get one copy to review before ordering any large amounts. Everyone present agreed.

After a motion and quick recess we headed for the get demo.

And what a delight it was. Everyone present got a chance to see the much talked about and long awaited JAGUAR!!! And from the FINE demo this is one game machine that is truly the standard for all other game machines to shoot for. Thanks Scott Prince!

Some phone numbers you will need to communicate with our club:

President:
Bob Smith ☛ 299-5374

Vice-President:
John Baker ☛ 823-9705

Treasurer:
Bill Baker ☛ 277-3438

Secretary:
Gail Kindstrom ☛ 293-3063

Librarians:
8-Bit:
Arthur Averett 290-2096

ST:
Rick Sava ☛ 574-6033

Publicity:
Jim Porter ☛ 695-1467

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Treasurer's Report
December, 1993

Opening balance for checking	$721.11
Deposit	0.00
Service charge	0.00
Debits	63.60
Ending Balance	$657.51

As of December 30, 1993

Birthdays for December

David Bauer
Charles Harribey
Jeff Potter
Bob Smith
Dave Tipton

What NO new members?

Ole Saint Nick...

800 XL 256k $40
1050 Doubled $45
130XE $35
Mono Monitor for 8-bit $25
Printer Interface $10
Many more items, see Gail or call 407-293-3063

Future Spaces

Pondering The Future
by Gene Windell

The Final Frontier? To me, the most fascinating thing about the computer onboard the starship Enterprise is that it has no printers. Virtually all of the input/output is sound and visual imagery. I have absolutely no doubt that the role of printed paper output in computing will eventually diminish to the point of zero, and that a powerful trend is already moving in that direction.

Silicon Graphics recently introduced a $4,995 computer named the "Indy," which is as prescient as the original Macintosh was in its day. The base price includes 16mb of DRAM, a 15" monitor, a CD-ROM drive, an image capture board, SCSI-2, Ethernet and ISDN networking hardware, a DSP and 16-bit audio, and a video camera. The CPU is a 64-bit RISC with 100 mhz clock speed, with 64-bit data and memory buses. Though primarily designed as a graphics/audio workstation, this thing can do LAN video teleconferencing and video E-mail right out of the box! It has sufficient speed and bandwidth to process full screen, full color, full motion video with sound and record it to disc in real time. While SGI has never been known for selling cheap computers, the price of this machine is as amazing as its features. Unfortunately, no games or genealogy programs for this computer have been announced.

Some have said they would buy a Falcon030 if only it had a separate keyboard. What I want is an Atari priced computer that performs like the SGI Indy, and don't care much about where they put the keyboard.

The State of the State The PC clone industry is in an ever worsening state of disarray. Cut throat price competition is driving the manufacturers out of business, while the profits of Microsoft and Intel continue to soar. The myth of compatibility is becoming a joke; is it going to be "Industry Standard" architecture, EISA, MCA, VESA local bus, or Intel's new PCI? This is a particularly daunting question since none of them address the needs of future RISC processors, or even the Pentium for that matter. IBM's attempt at leadership by introducing the 32-bit Microchannel (MCA) bus was rejected by the industry because nobody wanted to pay the licensing fee. Consequently, the main appeal of of clones, standardization, has been replaced by a chaotic competition for dominance among a group of inferior system bus designs.

Personally I think the inadequacy of Intel's chip designs, the confusion among bus standards, and the shrinking profitability of producing clones make the whole PC industry ripe for a shakeout and a turn in direction. In other words, a window of opportunity has opened.

After suffering from its agreements with both Microsoft and Intel, IBM has severed its ties with both companies and is headed into direct competition with them. Their OS/2 operating system competes directly with Microsoft's Windows and Window NT. The 64-bit RISC PowerPC chip competes directly with Intel's future offerings. Even PC-DOS versions higher than 6.0 are coded exclusively by IBM. IBM's alliance with Motorola to produce CPU chips, and their joint project with Apple to create the Taligent "Pink" operating system of the future clearly indicates they intend to challenge the Microsoft/Intel dominated status quo.

Even though IBM is still the largest and richest manufacture of personal computers, they learned from the industry-wide rejection of MCA that even they aren't big enough to change standards by themselves. Consequently they seem to have joined forces with Apple, their largest competitor, to develop technology which can sucessfully compete with the Microsoft/Intel dominated clone industry.

The Macintosh never appealed to anything more than a niche market, that being people who wanted to run graphics oriented applications on a computer that was easy to use. The Atari ST and Amiga were competing for an even smaller niche within this same market. The wide public acceptance of Windows 3.0 erased any large distinctions between a PC clone and the Mac/ST/Amiga, and market shares were adjusted accordingly. Apple saw the handwriting on the wall, and recognized that they could not profitably compete for long with a Windows/Soundblaster equipped clone. Apple's only means of survival was to join forces with IBM to challenge the clone makers with different and better technology. I suspect the message read by Atari and Commodore was essentially the same.

The PowerPC chip will be produced by Motorla. Due to Apple's influence, it will be backward compatible with the MC680X0 series chips. It will also use microcode allowing it to emulate the Intel 80X86 chips. Consequently, it can run OS/2 and the Mac OS in addition to the Taligent OS whenever it arrives. But for the PowerPC to take market share away from the Intel CPU based clone industry, IBM will need the support of as many other manufacturers as they can get. As with Apple, I think Atari's only hope for survival as a computer maker lies along this same path. If the PowerPC can run the Mac OS, it can surely handle Multi-TOS as well. Perhaps this is what Atari's TOS 5.0 is all about.

Now, back to the SGI Indy. It's graphics subsystem is based on 2 proprietary AISC chips, which process pixels, polygons and triangles at about the same rate as the Atari Jaguar. On a cost production basis, I think the Jaguar has the edge because it incorporates a DSP within the basic chipset where the SGI Indy uses a separate Motorola DSP.

Is it within Atari's means to produce a computer like the SGI Indy, but at a lower cost? Motorola

Continued next page ☞

and IBM would benefit if they did. I think market conditions will force Atari to do exactly this, and they have no other choice except to get out of the computer business altogether.

I think that now is exactly the wrong time to jump ship and buy either a PC clone or a Macintosh. In a few more months, the PowerPC will obsolete your purchase - and Atari may have one of the first computers on the market that makes use of this new RISC CPU. Anyone who is still developing for TOS is probably short-sighted if their software is not Multi-TOS compatible, because this is the bridge between the existing user base and the Atari computers of the future.

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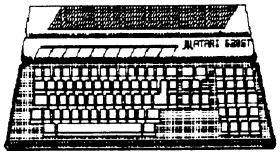

The Falcon has LANDED!!!

The unsung hero of Xmodem

By Al Fasoldt

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Ward Christensen is a name to remember. In the infancy of home computers, before the IBM PC was born and before the Apple Macintosh and the Atari ST were ever dreamed of, Ward Christensen invented a foolproof way for computers to send files back and forth by telephone.

He knew that telephone lines around his home in Chicago couldn't be trusted to transmit every little beep and blip that comes out of a computer's modem in perfect order. Phones were made for people, not computers, and any kind of a bad connection can turn a computer file into a bunch of gibberish. That's bad enough when you're sending a note to someone, but it's deadly when you're trying to send a file. Even one byte out of place in a program file can make your computer lock up.

So Christensen came up with a way of wrapping computer data inside a protective packet. Each packet was small -- only 128 bytes, about the size of a typical sentence in this article -- and was sent to the other computer with a brief code attached to it.

The code worked like a passport photo. The computer that was sending the data took a quick snapshot of the data (in a mathematical way, so to speak) and sent the snapshot along with the data. When the packet containing the data and the snapshot arrived at the other computer, the receiving computer looked at the snapshot and then scanned the 128 bytes to check for a match.

If something was wrong -- if the bytes that were more or less waiting at the border of the receiving computer didn't match this passport photo -- that computer sent the 128 bytes away with a message to come back and try again. This could happen as many as 10 times for each packet of 128 bytes before the receiving computer gave up all hope and shut down the transmission.

Technically, what was going on involved computations of checksums. These are the combined totals of numbers, using the actual numerical equivalents in all the bytes. (All computer information is made up of numbers, so a quick computation is very simple for computers.)

The sending computer added them up, and sent the results -- the checksum -- along to the receiving computer. It, in turn, did the same thing, then compared its results to the checksum that came along with the packet. If they matched, it let the data through and called for another packet.

Christensen called his method "Xmodem," which stood for "Xternal Modem." At the time that Christensen developed his system, all modems were what we now call external (attached to the computer by a short cable), but he was referring to a modem that was far away, on the other end of the telephone line. Xmodem quickly became the standard way of sending files from one computer to another, and this, in turn, was a major catalyst in the revolution in personal computing.

Xmodem is still being used today in both the original version, called Checksum Xmodem, and in an improved version that does more intricate math, called CRC Xmodem.

Other methods have become popular, each one building on the success of Xmodem. One improved method -- or "protocol," as these file-transfer methods are called -- is Ymodem. It sends data in larger packets, and is able to send more than one file at a time. It can also send the name of the file along with the actual data.

But the king of protocols is now Zmodem. It's the most widely used method, and has been built into nearly all the latest telecommunications programs for PCs, Macs, Ataris and Amigas. Even Unix computers, which had been stuck with an odd scheme called Kermit for a decade, are now able to use Zmodem.

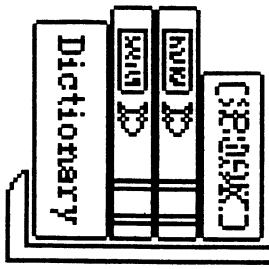
Zmodem is super-smart. It's able to ask the receiving computer to do a lot of the groundwork in transferring files. When two computers link up using Zmodem, they actually talk to each other to find out whether the files that are about to be sent already exist on the receiving computer. If they do, Zmodem is able to decide whether the files should be replaced at the receiving end (if they are older versions, for example), or if they should be left alone.

Zmodem also is able to pick up where it left off, if a file transfer has been interrupted. In the most advanced version of Zmodem, sold by Zmodem's inventor, Chuck Forsberg, the calling computer will even redial and resend the rest of the file, all on its own.

But Xmodem still has a place. Of all the protocols that do any kind of error-checking, it's the leanest and fastest in some situations. And it holds the honor of showing how the whole thing could be done.

Ward Christensen never received the kind of reward his invention should have brought him. He never got rich, never rose to the top of a major software company and never became a household word. Instead, he continued to run his computer bulletin board -- the world's first BBS, by the way -- and has remained active on the national online services. When it comes to unsung heroes, here's one guy who should get a whole chorus.

FAX Tips and Info The following information is based on messages that Supra has posted on other services in response to specific tech support questions. The information below is not an exact copy of any messages posted elsewhere and is paraphrased so as not to violate any copyrghts. This information, while based on answers from Supra, should be applicable to other vendor's FAX Modems as well, especially other Rockwell based FAX Modems. This information is posted as is.



For Your Information

Supra can be reached as follows: Supra BBS: 503-967-2444, FAX 503-967-2401, Faxback System: 503-967-0072
GEnie: SUPRATECH and Internet: supratech@supra.com

Supra recommends that any screen saver programs be disabled, as they may slow down the computer and interfere with the FAX software. They also point out that other possible causes of problems are operating system level disk compression utilities.

[Note: If a screen saver utility is used, such as the Extend-O-Save modular screen saver in Codehead's Warp 9, then the RS-232 Check Box should be enabled in the EOS parameters screen. This will cause the screen saver to return to normal operation if any RS-232 activity occurs, such as a FAX send or receive operation.

Also, to the best of our knowledge, there is no conflict with any disk compression software such as Trace Technologies Data Diet or ORA/HiSoft's Data Lite. We do recommend that users of TOS versions 1.00 and 1.02 either upgrade to a newer TOS release or use the FATSPEED.PRG in the AUTO folder, which is available on-line. Disk Cacheing utilities such as those with the ICD Hard Disk Software and Atari's CACHENNN.PRG should also be used to improve the disk performance. It is also important that FOLDRNNN.PRG be used (or set the Folders in the ICD Hard Disk HDUTILS.PRG) and that POOLFIX3.PRG or POOLFIX4.PRG be used on TOS versions 1.04 to 1.062 as appropriate].

Supra recommends that users upgrade to a minimum of version 1.70 or 1.80 of their firmware ROMS. (As many users here have found) Supra has also found that some users will have more success with Class 1 and others with Class 2.

Supra indicates the differences between the Supra V.32bis FAX Modem and the Supra 144LC FAX Modem are: 144LC does not support Class 2, it does not have the green 2 digit alphanumeric display, and it will not be ROM upgradable with the new features that will be available for the V.32bis FAX Modem. The 144LC has a lower price due to the fact that a less expensive chipset is used, since only supports Class 1.

Supra recommends that if you are using the Silent Answer mode, that it you also have a cordless telephone located in the same room, move it to another location.

The following information is based on messages that US Robotics has posted on other services in response to specific tech support questions. The information below is not an exact copy of any messages posted elsewhere and is paraphrased so as not to violate any copyrghts. This information is posted as is.

US Robotics can be reached as follows: Tech Support: 800-982-5151, FAX: 708-982-5235, Sales: 800-DIAL-USR.

US Robotics has indicated that there may be a Class 2 Sportster FAX Modem at some time in the future, but there are no upgrade offers available for Sportster owners at this time and it is unlikely that there will be in the future. However, US Robotics HST owners are eligible for upgrades.

US Robotics indicates that their new Courier V32terbo is a Class 2 FAX Modem.

[Note: US Robotics did not specify if these FAX Modems are Class 2 or the upcoming Class 2.0 compatible].

US Robotics has indicated that there is new firmware available with their FAX Modems. The firmware revision can be checked with the ATI7 command. US Robotics does not recommend upgrading the firmware, unless there is a known problem with the current firmware.

US Robotics indicates that the Sportster 14.4 is not able to determine between a FAX or data call and can only be in one mode at a time.

[Note: This would imply that the AT+FAE=? command would return a 0. While this is not a limitation with the current version of STraight FAX!, we are working on supporting Adaptive Answer mode (AT+FAE=1) to allow a BBS and the STraight FAX! to share the FAX Modem for incoming data and FAX calls].

Built in Mice The Alt-arrow keys move the mouse cursor 10 pixels at a time and the Alt-Shift-arrow keys move the mouse cursor 1 pixel at a time. Just try that on any PC and you'll see the advantage of having a built-in mouse!

The "Phantom Typist" is a rather interesting bug in TOS, though it CAN be annoying if you're working on something important since you need to reboot to recover from it. What happens is that somehow the keyboard buffer overflows and all of a sudden you start
seeing the last few keys typed slowly repeated over and over. For example:

This is the Phantom Typ Typ Typ Typ Typ Typ Typ Typ (and so on)

For me (on the rare occasions it DOES occur), it's usually after I accidentally hit a few keys at once or quickly do a backspace and another key or somesuch.

Mountain QWK I recently received the Geneva Multitasking

Continued next page ☞

AES by Gribnif Software. After a few minor changes, I'm pleased to report that Mountain QWK is now fully compatible with Geneva, MultiTOS, and the Falcon030! I'll be uploading version 1.18 (The Geneva Fixed version) in a day or two, watch for it! (SPEEDO GDOS compatibility was fixed in version 1.17)

Also, Version 4 of The Recipe Box is nearing completion! Things are going well with it, and I estimate a release date around the end of November.

Speedy ST I installed my Turbo 030 today. I'm speechless. The stuff that I have found to be compatible with the accelerator so far just flies! I mean.....It's scary. :-) When I first booted with the puter I was looking at the screen and had to stand back as stuff screamed...I thought something might break. A little like when you speed around a curve. I think I will never look back.

Now I have to figure out what runs and what doesn't. I guess it was like that for people who bought TT's after they had been using ST's for years. I'd sure like for any other Turbo 030 users to let me know of their experience. It might save me some trouble! Many thanks to Jim at Fast Technology. I think my productivity will go up immensly.

>>>>> An ST with an 030 chip is _alot_ different than a TT. THere's a bunch of circuits in the TT for the extra IO that don't exist in the ST environment. The biggest difference is TOS 2.06 instead of TOS 3.06, so anything looking at the rom ID will not find TT TOS even though there is an 030.

The question is _what_ TT devoted SW is giving you trouble? From there we can figure out the why, maybe ;-)

But the Turbo030 has the TT ram in the same place as the TT has it, an has the same 030 MMU settings as the TT, and should make most SW happy.

STZip Memory Requirements I just realized I had never posted the results of the memory requirements for STZip and Zip Jr, except a little in the Lharc 2.x cat. I don't think anyone is interested in that but me, so here is the "relative" version, no numbers.

The requirements increase for each of the operations in ascending order: verbose, restore, store, explode, implode, inflate, inflate to screen (Jr), deflate (all degrees), inflate to screen viewer STZip (depending on decompressed text file size).

Because of higher overhead, STZip has higher requirements than Zip Jr in all categories. Compression generally requires more than decompression. Both will de/compress with significantly lower requirements at the lesser compression schemes; store, shrink, implode. In fact, implosion requires less free memory than decompression of deflated. There is no real difference in requirements for de/compression of the various degrees of deflation.

IDE Drives and Modem Ports
>ICD software will not even format an IDE
>drive! Yes, you can use a ICD
>software on a HDX formatted drive. (I have been doing this on my Falcon
>since I bought it...works great.) I don't think you could get much work
>done on a 85 meg Hard Drive when you use 10 megs per stereo minute.

The latest (6.2.4) of the ICD PRO utilites WILL format IDE drives. I recently installed it on my Falcon and it works fantastic! Hats off 'again' to those guys at ICD! My understanding, the 6.3.x version that will be released will also support Master and Slave IDE drives as well! From what I understand, there is room within the Falcon to install an additional 2.5" IDE drive, thus Master/Slave drive! If you want the BEST hard drive utilities for your ATARI computer, get ICD's, you will NOT be sorry. Built in disc cacheing, fix for the so called 40 folder bug and all.

Interesting note:

Just wanted to pass this information out to you all. (It may already be known to majority, but I found out on my own) I had read a message not long ago on here, about the RS-232/Serial problem on the Falcon. Well, it's not really a problem, but an enhancement (in my opinion)

The Falcon030's is dual compatable... somewhat. That is, it supports the Mega STE/TT port 2 or has simular qualities. It also has the ST standard... only somewhat, and although I am not a electronic wizzard or techno inclined, it's probley the reason why the Aladdin software does not work on the Falcon. Anyway off to what I had found out.

I have Stalker, but I am sure other telecommunication programs which allow you to switch 'ports' will have the same results. (By the way, I'd like to know what other software will allow you to do this) I switched to the Mega STE/TT modem port 2 and saved the configuration, dialed out and it worked fine. I then went back in and reset a few other things to include selecting that the modem sets DCD properly and also selected Drop DTR and it all works fine now!

Now for another test... I went ahead and reset all the boards that I call out to to the Baud Rate of 38,400 baud! I called out and low and behold, it worked! I had a connection of 14.4k baud v.32bis/v.42bis DCE speed and a 38.4k baud DTE speed! Never had thought that you would beable to break the 19.2k DTE speed on a stock ST/STE and even the Falcon without a hardware modification. I just recently discovered that I was wrong. I tryed uploading, downloading just to make sure and it works fantastic! I d/led an 147k ASCII file (not compressed) at got over 2600cps rate using Zmodem 32bit CRC! If not anything, I hope this enlightens some of you new falcon owners to some useful information, and not the same boring stuff.

Math Coprocessor 'Standards' Just because a program "supports a math chip" does not mean it will support a 68881 added to an 68000 ST. I'd guess most of the programs mentioned support a math chip on a 68030 such as the SST-30 or

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Turbo-30. The Motorola 68020 and up supported a true co-processor with handshaking between the chips so the 6888x could execute math instructions. ATARI introduced a "standard" for attaching a 68881 to a 68000 as an I/O device. ATARI, CMI, and JRI? produced boards that used this method, I own a CMI. The only program I found that used that "standard" was the ATARI demo that came with their board.... I heard rumors that DYNACAD supported an I/O based math chip. The 68030 method of using a co-proccessor is a true "industry standard" (read non-ATARI), even MAC programs running under Spectre recognize my SST-30's 68882.

More ST Video Info First, you don't need a video card to view all three ST resolutions if you use a monitor that can handle the output from the MSTe's monitor port. The one that most Atarians prefer is the NEC 3D, still available as a new model, selling for about $350-$400. No other monitors that can be purchased new can handle the ST's output. (The problem is not with the ST; it's with the industry, which has moved away from the technical specifications that the ST requires for its monitor. I'll be happy to be more explicit if you'd like.)

The 3D will show ST Low, ST Medium and ST High on the same screen. You need a fairly inexpensive monitor connecting box to hook up the 3D.

To view any other modes, you need a graphics card. The MSTe has a VME (European-standard) bus that is accessed by taking off a cover in the back of the computer. A VME card slides right in, in a job that takes about three minutes. (One minute to do the installation, and two to spend wondering if you've actually done it right since it was so easy to do....) A "bus," by the way, is a set of signal lines connected to the computer's innards.

I am partial to the Crazy Dots II card, since I own it. It takes advantage of the industry-standard Tseng ET/4000 graphics accelerator chip. (What Hayes is to modems and Seagate is to hard drives, Tseng is to graphics ships.) The CDII card can also be purchased with the NVDI system accelerator, which combines NVDI's already impressive screen speedups with the ET/4000 chip's hardware routines. The result is the fastest Atari graphics routines in the business.

Other cards may offer similar (if less speedy) advantages.

With a modern multi-synchronous monitor, a good graphics card can supply these basic resolutions on your MSTe:

o 320 X 200 X 2, 4, 16, 256 or 32,000 colors. (ST Low)
o 640 X 200 X the same range of colors. (ST Med)
o 640 X 400 X the same range of colors. (ST High)
o 320 X 400 X the same range of colors. (TT Low)
o 640 X 480 X the same range of colors. (TT Med, VGA)
o 800 X 600 X the same range of colors. (Super VGA)
o 1040 X 768 X 2, 4, 16 or 256 colors. (Extended VGA)

In addition, the CDII card, when used with a high-quality monitor, offers these resolutions:

o 1280 X 960 X 2, 4 or 16 colors (TT High)
o 1600 X 1200 X 2, 4 or 16 colors (CAD-CAM standard)

A Super VGA monitor is required for all resolutions greater than 640
X 480. Nearly all monitors sold today are SVGA or better. Monitors that are capable of a maximum resolution of 800 X 600 (such as the NEC 3D) can usually show 1040 X 768 in an interlaced mode, in which the monitor does not have to draw every line in one pass. It draws the odd lines, then the even lines, then the odd lines again, and so on. In some situations, interlace mode is fine, but it is unsatisfactory for word processing and similar uses.

You do not need an adaptor if you buy a graphics card and an SVGA monitor. All you need is a standard VGA monitor cable, which usually comes with the monitor.

HUMOR ONLINE

by Dave Lyons

I may never understand how the designers of the RS-232 "standard" for serial communication managed to use 25 wires where only 3 are really necessary. Maybe they made a deal with the companies that make cables, connectors, and switch boxes...I just don't know.

Well, I thought of a few things that the RS-232 standard lacks, and since there are already so many extra signals, a few more can't hurt anybody, right? Heck, let's go for 50-pin connectors and cables and add the following new signals. (Just to make sure this isn't compatible with any old equipment, all OLD signals are moved up one pin number (Carrier Detect becomes 9 instead of 8, etc., and pin 25 goes to pin 1).

Pin Name Description
-- -- ---

26 XCAT Should be connected to chassis of devices. Used with the next two signals, this provides protection against cats who haven't learned not to walk on floppy disks or serial equipment. This signal should supply about 2000 volts (at a VERY low current level; wouldn't want to HURT the cute little thing, just teach it not to walk on anything in the computer room).

27 CATGND Cat ground. Used with pin 26. This signal should be connected to another part of the chassis or the tabletop.

28 CATDET Cat detect.

29 SD Self-destruct. This signals causes the device to destroy itself.

30 SDACK Self-destruct acknowledge. Acknowledges that the device has destroyed itself.

31 VADIC This signal indicates to a computer that the device on the other end is a modem that uses VADIC protocol.
(Note: CompuCenter Iowa users should jumper this signal to SD and then buy a decent modem.)

32 STBIT1 Stutter bits. With pin 33, sets the number of "stutter bits" (0 to 3 of them) to be included before each byte transmitted. This may reduce the number of people who feel inferior to computer equipment by showing them that computers have problems communicating with each other.

33 STBIT2

34 CABR Cable ready. It's not enough to know that the Data Set is ready (DSR) and the Data Terminal is read (DTR). We also need to know that the CABLE connecting them is ready.

35 GRR Gremlins ready. Not everybody knows it, but there are little green guys inside most modern computer equipment. Most of the time they sleep, but other times they cause trouble. The next 6 signals are for dealing with gremlins.

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36 220A Used with pin 37, supplies 220 volt power for the gremlins' air conditioning. On hot days when gremlins can't sleep, applying power to these pins may solve your problems.

37 220B

38 110H 110 volts, hot side. When the 220 volt power doesn't help and gremlin problems persist, use this with pin 39 to supply 110 volts for the gremlins' TV and video game center.

39 110N 110 volts, neutral side.

40 MOON Indicates the phase of the moon. Sometimes solves mysterious problems.

41 LHI Pins 41 through 45 can be used to implement the "like" protocol when the normal RTS/CTS protocol isn't enough. This one means "Like HI" and is used to establish a connection.

42 LHTY2 Like HI to You Too. Acknowledges pin 41.

43 LLTT Like Listen To This. Requests permission to send data.

44 LOK Like OK. Grants permission to transmit data.

45 LWOW Like WOW. Acknowledges receipt of data.

46 HEY Pins 46 to 50 may be used to implement the "Eighties" protocol when RTS/CTS and "Like" protocols won't do the job. This signal is similar to RTS (Request to Send).

47 NP No Problem. Acknowledges HEY.

48 HUH? Signals that data was not received correctly (possibly wrong number of stutter bits).

49 YEAH Acknowledges data received.

50 KMG365 Like YEAH, but for avid Emergency One fans.

That makes 50! Let's hear your suggestions for MORE serial signals. Maybe we can get 100 and REALLY make the cable manufacturers happy.

Perspectives

by Richard Brown

How My Dead Computer Found A New Life or, Great Things Still Happen in Atari-Land

Doomsayers Perhaps you know what it is to have a peanut gallery. You know, one, two, or more people who like your company (or need a life) so much that they invade your business, home, or apartment with such regularity that you either feel surrounded or that you have your own, private entourage. I call mine a "peanut gallery."

Peanut galleries consider it their duty to pass judgment or at least offer opinions on everything within range of their senses. Unfortunately, my peanut gallery includes one ex-Atari-born-again-IBM dealer who tries very hard to be the "king of the doomsayers."

Here's a guy who told a friend of mine at the Glendale Show to sell his Atari stock before he lost his shirt. Since Glendale, Atari stock rose another 300%, at which point many who bought into Atari this year sold their stock. Why not? The stock had risen about 2,400% since January. The price had leveled somewhat. Profit taking was inevitable.

Apart from my dealer friend's sage stock tips, he still believes the Jaguar is vaporware, even after it appeared in USA Today, our national newspaper. In full color, no less. He even knows people who have played with it at his beloved IBM's booth at Comdex. I've even showed him remarks from actual owners captured on GEnie. Funny thing about vaporware.

So, with the unwitting minions of DOS and Windows in my peanut gallery, contempt for my Atari naturally follows. Each new software purchase comes with a tirade about "wasted money on a dead machine."

Atari Works, Studio Photo, That's Write 3, Speedo GDOS, all of them wastes of money, or so I'm told. Over and over and over.

As a screenwriter, I tell my peanut gallery that old fashioned as it may sound, movie scripts are done in Pica ten point. Period. That's standard format. I ask them what IBM product will improve my DeskJet's resident Pica font?

"None, but..."

Not so fast: what IBM program has the look, the feel, and equals or surpasses the ease of use of DOS's Microsoft Works with its all-in-one word processor, spreadsheet, and database, plus the font quality of Adobe Type Manager, oh, that can run on a machine _without_ a hard drive.

None?

Please, Keep Your Machine! My peanut gallery can keep their IBM's. Although there are a few somewhat notable exceptions, especially on a few $25,000 to $42,000 systems that I've actually found impressive, most things DOS and all things Microsoft have too much of that "written by committee" appeal. There is no earthly reason a word processor should require 10-15 megs of hard drive space. Word for Windows has yet to improve my peanut gallery's communication skills. Not to mention that I can easily duplicate everything they've ever done in that program on my TT.

And now that MultiTos is a reality, my peanut gallery scoffs and speaks of the wonders of Windows NT. This program straps on a cumbersome sophistication to the comically inadequate DOS operating system at an expense of 70-90 megabytes of hard drive space. Clunky coding to say the least, and to fix an embarrassing OS that never dreamed of a graphical interface except as an afterthought, a snooty - way down the road - only because Apple grabbed its market share -- afterthought.

Take away a DOS clone's hard drive, and, just like the Mac, it is no more than scrap metal, unlike even the original ST, designed from the ground up to be a GEM of a system.

Perhaps I'm a little rough on the cloners. There are a few things to be glad about when it comes to those "other" systems. I think some hat tipping might even be in order.

Other's Misfortunes We can all thank the explosion of poorly coded software in the DOS world for forcing down the price of hard drives. With an inexpensive ICD host adapter, we Atarians can have our cake and eat it too. The advent of solid virtual memory systems, such as the one inherent in Calamus, for example, and through other TSR type software, means that these big cheap hard drives can give most ST's the added punch that one or two hundred megs of extra RAM can provide. I watched an old Mega 4 spit out a color PageStream document to a color Deskjet wherein the color imagery boosted the document size by 12 megs. The range of possibilities with virtual memory make even an old Mega a very impressive thing to see.

Recent Developments Still, my peanut gallery tells me my TT is dead, so I ponder over some recent developments that have closed my ears to such nonsense.

Like Atari Works.

You know, the bezier technology, Speedo GDOS supercharged, extremely user friendly, all-in-one WYSIWYG word processor, spreadsheet, and database that few end users will find incapable of

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meeting their day to day needs. Not to mention an end product quality that's world class.

Speedo GDOS brings up that up-to-now dreaded term "GDOS" again, but this time around there is no weakness to be found. The once upon a time woes of GDOS have suddenly given way to cries of "I told you so." The term "Speedo" refers to a licensing agreement between Atari and Bitstream, one of the world's largest and most respected font foundries. Speedo is Bitstream's latest font format, and the technology involved is no Edsel.

It occurs to me that Word Perfect, the DOS icon that heralded itself as the No. 1 word processor in the world at the last Comdex show, yes _that_ Word Perfect, at the same time heralded its Bitstream Speedo compatibility as something new and desirable in late 1993. Funny a dead computer like my TT finds itself on the cutting edge.

As a Speedo GDOS user, I like being able to stop by Egghead Software or other "mainstream PC" retailers to pick up fonts for my Atari. _The Word Perfect Six.O Font Pack_ from Bitstream supplies Atari Speedo GDOS and That's Write 3 Users with about 50 high quality, genuine foundry fonts that more than approximate their PostScript alter egos. Just like PostScript fonts, Speedo's scalable bezier technology looks great at any size.

Compo, with its extraordinary That's Write 3, also makes use of Speedo fonts, but, just like Word Perfect 6.0, incorporates this support in the program itself. That's Write does not even require Speedo GDOS to offer Bitstream's huge advantages of font display and printout quality. I suppose it's a bit amusing. That's Write 3 incorporates the same forward thinking as IBM's Word Perfect 6.0. Hasn't Compo heard? Atari is pushing up the daisies, isn't it?

With Bitstream Speedo fonts, whether used in That's Write or a Speedo GDOS compatible program like Works, printed material from an Atari computer is indistinguishable from that of a Mac or IBM, and no laser printer is needed to accomplish the feat.

Atari Works and That's Write 3 have decreased my PageStream use immensely, as now I can have DTP quality fonts, in a wide selection, printing from two extremely fast word processors. Parity, if not superiority over the DOS and Mac environments has been a long time coming outside of the DTP domain. It's here now, and will stay that way. As a result, Atarians can rest a little easier over the fate of their machines.

Regarding these two programs, That's Write 3 is far and away the powerhouse of the two when it comes to word processing. I use That's Write for screenwriting because of its unbeatable macro and instruction capabilities, so powerful that you think you might a way to have it make your morning coffee.

Atari Works, on the other hand, is truly ideal for mail merge purposes. Although That's Write has it's own, very powerful mail merge capability, I've never seen any program handle sophisticated mail merges as easily as Works, which seamlessly integrates its database and word processor. Furthermore, Works' database easily coexists with CardFile from Gribnif, which many users already employ for personal productivity. The "type it once" philosophy that I like to follow is beautifully supported by Atari Works, which, although a simplified subset of That's Write's seemingly unlimited features, can hold its own for many common purposes and has a less "layered" feel and therefor a bit faster for simpler jobs.

Of course, to be fair, it's possible to have NINE different projects online simultaneously in That's Write 3. With a bit more set-up time, if only due to the immense range of possibilities offered, you could be custom tailored to meet any and all needs all the time. It could be the beginning of a new philosophy: "set-up once, use mostly."

About Calligrapher... A word is due to Calligrapher, a program I bought prior to either That's Write 3 or Atari Works. Calligrapher could be the most ambitious of all three offerings with its extremely impressive "pak" approach to powerful modules that work with a powerful main program to do some pretty amazing things.

Unfortunately, Calligrapher abandoned Speedo GDOS, apparently as if the software designers were unaware that it was coming to market. Like That's Write 3, Calligrapher employs internal routines that negate the need for Speedo GDOS, but, unlike That's Write 3, Calligrapher uses it's own font system based on straight lines, not beziers, and, barring limited PostScript printer font substitution, it will never live up to the standards of Bitstream's Speedo technology.

In working with Calligrapher, the first thing I did after sending away for the "key" disk allowing proper hard drive installation, was to test print the supplied fonts on my DeskJet 500C. In a basic test of printing a test phrase in 8, 10, 12, 18, 24, 36, 48, 64, 72, and 96 point type, the printout was all I needed to see. Calligrapher doesn't scale fonts so that they appear to be the same outline from size to size. Various imperfections cropped up, different ones at different locations in different sizes, especially noticed in the larger point sizes.

In itself, poor scaling is not a problem if the smaller point sizes, those used in common body text, are adequate. Testing again with blocks of body text, Calligrapher shows further problems. The Times-Roman equivalent never prints in a Roman weight, but rather appears to be between demi and bold in weight. Compounding this problem, few of Calligrapher's available fonts are suitable for serious body copy, and they are rather expensive. The Word Perfect Six.O font pack comprises so many useful fonts that it eclipses the bulk of Calligrapher's offerings at a fraction of the price when considering the cost per font.

Summing up my test of body text, the weights, for me, are simply unacceptable off the DeskJet, and certainly won't pass muster against Atari Works, That's Write, or anything DOS Windows with TrueType produces. As a result, it doesn't matter that Calligrapher can do things most word processors would never dream of doing. The printout quality is substandard with differing outline shapes, lack of

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Roman weights, and limited font variety.

Unplanned future alignment with Speedo GDOS would turn things around for Calligrapher, but until such an upgrade, I've cleared it from my hard drive. It's not that I bear ill-will for this program. I simply have, for years, been very attuned to font systems and font quality, and, with my associates in the DTP field, have owned everything from 300 to 3,000 dpi PostScript devices in both laser printers and imagesetters. I know fonts and output quality. I just think printers like the DeskJet and Bubblejet (I travel with my BJ-10e) should perform with excellence because, in general, they do on other platforms.

Other people have found programs like Atari Works and the new Speedo GDOS just as impressive as I have. Michael Hebert, an Atari Works guru active on GEnie and CompuServe, has produced one of the first independently produced manuals I've ever seen for any Atari program. He calls it "Papa's Grafik Guide to AtariWorks (TM) Word Processor."

"Papa's Grafik Guide" is a must-have addition to any Atari Works user's library. 102 letter size pages with its well laid out contents pages and forward, this book is just what it says: a graphic approach to a program manual. Filled with exceptional screen shots and illustrations, the book itself was produced in Atari Works, as Michael says, as "an experiment" in pushing the envelope of his Atari Works experience.

Not only does Michael Hebert prove his mastery of Atari Works' Word Processor, but in addition, he provides an overview of nearly a dozen associated programs, some of which are available as GEnie downloads (and, he gives you the file numbers) to advise you on getting your most out of Atari Works. If you are not a GEnie subscriber, Michael will send you copies of all the GEnie programs he recommends for $6.00.

I'd strongly advise the curious to buy the book to see Atari Works in action, dealers to stock some copies because it will be an automatic sale to an Atari Works buyer, and current Atari Works users to do themselves a favor and buy it because it's not only terrific, highly informative stuff, but something we should see more of on the Atari platform. Michael is planning further books on Atari Works' Database and Spreadsheet. Support his efforts and stand by your ST/TT/Falcon!

Nothing is more annoying than finding three hundred books averaging 500 pages books about every last DOS program sitting on a bookstore's shelves without a single word about Atari, save for a 680x0 machine language reference book aimed primarily at the Mac.

Oh, there you go. I've said it. 500 page DOS manuals. In small type. Michael Hebert does the same job in 20% of the page count, with bigger type. If this isn't telling you something about user friendliness...

You can buy "Papa's Grafik Guide to AtariWorks Word Processor" from:

Michael Hebert
Papa's Grafik Press
1228 North School Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

The list price is $16.95 without shipping and handling.

I'd suggest contacting Michael Hebert on GEnie through electronic mail at M.Hebert1 or on CompuServe at 70640,3556 to discuss your order.

Well, enough with the soap box for now. There's more to come, to be sure.

The Twelve bugs of Christmas

by Bob Smith

I thought I would give you one last Christmas present and I couldn't think of anything until I looked in my closet. Lo and behold I found the following little package wrapped up just for you. Enjoy and HO HO HO!!!

(Sung ~ To the tune of "Twelve Days of Christmas" ~)

For the first bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
see if they can do it again
For the second bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
ask them how they did it,
and see if they can do it again.
For the third bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again.
For the fourth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the fifth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the sixth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the seventh bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the eighth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
find a way around it
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again

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For the ninth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
blame it on the hardware
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the tenth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
change the documentation
blame it on the hardware
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the eleventh bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
say it's not supported
change the documentation
blame it on the hardware
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again
For the twelth bug of Christmas my manager said to me,
tell them it's a feature
say it's not supported
change the documentation
blame it on the hardware
say they need an upgrade
re-install the software
ask for a dump
run with the debugger
try to reproduce it
ask them how they did it
and see if they can do it again

THE DEALER VIEWPOINT
Realizations and Expectations

by Sheldon Winick

The holiday shopping crush is over and despite the annual predictions of doom and gloom for Atari, they were somehow able to survive yet another year. They also managed to continue to bring forth still more new and exciting products. Their major contributions in 1993 were the much delayed Falcon030, and pretty much on-time (amazing!) Jaguar interactive multimedia entertainment system, which proved to be Atari's major attraction during this holiday season.

Much as the original Atari ST leapfrogged the competition in the personal computer marketplace a decade ago, the Jaguar has done the same thing for the home entertainment market. While the competing products from Sega (Genesis) and Nintendo (SNES) are based on a 16-bit system architecture, and the much heralded new 3DO system is based on a 32-bit system architecture, the Jaguar brings to the marketplace the power of 64-bit RISC technology. The following comparison chart from one of Atari's Jaguar product brochures says it all:

Hardware	Jaguar	3DO	SNES	Genesis
System Architecture	64-Bit	32-Bit	16-Bit	16-Bit
Rendering Speed (millions pixels/sec.)	>850	64	1	1
Number of Colors onscreen	16.8 Million	16.8 Million	256	64
Processors	Five: GPU DSP Object Blitter MC68000	Four: ARM60 DSP Graphic (2)	Two: 68CB16 DSP	Two: MC68000 Z80
Object Processor	Yes	No	No	No
16-bit CD-quality sound	Yes	Yes	No	No
S-Video	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
RGB	Yes	No	No	No

The Jaguar rollout has also been accompanied with a renewed marketing effort for the LYNX, Atari's portable color entertainment system. Between these two fine products, Atari appears to be positioning themselves for the apparent resurgence of consumer interest in game-only machines. And the Jaguar has the advantage of being capable of providing a gaming platform that is unmatched by not only the competing entertainment systems, but virtually all personal computer systems as well.

Of course, all of this means little to Atari's long suffering computer dealers who are faced with the most powerful and most competitively priced competition the industry has ever seen, at a time when Atari no longer even offers a full line of equipment for their dealers to have something to compete with. The only currently available Atari personal computer product remains the entry-level Falcon030. While it is impressive in its own right, it is really not capable of competing successfully against the full-featured, and similarly priced, competition. The Falcon is essentially a nich-market product of limited appeal.

All current marketing efforts at Atari appear geared toward promoting the new Jaguar. Atari's original concept of a limited holiday release in two or three test markets appears to have been virtually ignored by the major chain stores that had chosen to carry the Jaguar. What limited supplies of Jaguars that were available appear to have been distributed around the county to whatever markets were represented by those chains. Based upon posts here on GEnie and elsewhere, it appears that most everyone who wanted one of the new machines was able to find one.

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As the 'test market' concept appeared to be thrown out the window anyway during the holiday shopping season, it became evident that the only stores that were unable to obtain Jaguars were the Atari computer dealers that had remained loyal to Atari over the years. And, to top it off, Atari publicly announced here on GEnie they would be direct marketing the Jaguar themselves and began taking prepaid orders. Finally, as the holiday shopping season came into full swing, Atari relented and agreed to make some of the new Jaguars available to their computer dealers as well. However, they would not be available direct from Atari or the IBM production plant in Charlotte, NC, but would have to be ordered through Pacific software. That was at least a nice gesture toward Pacific, who has been this country's largest distributor of Atari products through the years.

So when exactly did those Jaguars become available for Atari's computer dealers? Christmas week! And the only way most dealers could get them before Christmas was to pay for overnight or 2nd day air shipments from Pacific. Considering the small profit margins on the product, those express shipment costs cut the profit margin in half. Add to that the fact that the product was still only available to Atari dealers in severly limited quantities, it is doubtful that many dealers could make enough profit from sales of the Jaguar to even cover the cost of a store demo unit. Of course, at this point, I'm sure most dealers were happy that they were at least able to supply the product to their loyal customers who wanted one.

The official national roll-out of the Jaguar wasn't supposed to happen until 1994, but this season's limited test market rollout appears to have been a total disaster in that sales were definitely not limited to the test market areas. Apparantly the only thing that was limited to those areas was Atari's advertising for the product. I have no idea how Atari's marketing analysts will be able to evaluate marketing data in those test market areas since so many of the Jaguars found their way throughout the country. From the activity in the Jaguar category on GEnie, it appears that a sizeable number of Jaguars wound up in the hands of the Atari loyalists who would've purchased one anyway, regardless of the test market ad campaign.

With the current lack of an upgrade path to new Atari computers for a large majority of our customers base, we're finding ourselves doing more system upgrading for our computer customers who are in need of more power or performance, at least for those customers who aren't choosing to turn to other platforms. The biggest interest seems to be coming in the areas of new or larger hard drives and additional RAM. With so few new software applications available and so many dealers reducing inventory or bailing out altogether, software bargains were abundant through the holiday shopping season. It was definitely a buyers market for those who took advantage of the situation.

One major problem area which came up in 1993 that Atari has still yet to address satisfactorily, is the warranty service situation. After Atari publicly announced the never-consumated national warranty service deal with GE-Service, they embarked on a program to phase out their existing dealerships from being authorized to perform warranty service. Atari dealers are no longer reimbursed for their time to perform warranty service, and are no longer encouraged or compensated for maintaining replacement parts inventory for existing systems. In fact, Atari no longer even provides a replacement parts program for their authorized dealerships under their current marketing program.

Where does this leave the typical Atarian who needs warranty repair on his or her system? Formerly, they could take it back to their dealer, or any authorized Atari service dealer for that matter, and have the repair work done in a timely and efficient manner. The current program requires that most machines be returned to Atari for warranty repair. How many computer users will be satisfied with the loss of their machine for 4-6 weeks or longer for a warranty repair? How many Atarians has this policy already driven away to other platforms? Can you blame them, especially when you consider most of the competition is now providing "on-site" service?

Here at Computer STudio, we are in our sixth year as an Atari dealership. That is a long time for anyone in this rapidly changing computer industry. We've seen many dealerships come and go through the years. Some were poorly organized or mismanaged; others were unable to remain competitive or establish a loyal customer base. But all dealerships must be assured a level playing field on which to compete, and must count on the ability of their suppliers to provide them with a continual supply of product lines to meet customer demand. They also have the right to expect to receive the cooperation and support of those suppliers to market their products and support their customers in an efficient manner. As of late, Atari has come up short in all those areas, and the situation continues to deteriorate.

What will 1994 bring? Will it be the 'Year of Atari' or perhaps the 'last' year of Atari? Will Atari drop their personal computer system support altogether and concentrate solely on their new Jaguar game technology? Will they surprise everyone and introduce a new and more powerful personal computer lineup? Will any Atari computer dealerships be able to survive long enough to even care?

Only time will tell. Happy (Atari) Computing.
Sheldon Winick (GEnie Address: S.WINICK)
Computer STudio (Asheville, NC)

(Editor's note: This is a continuing series that the Newsletter Staff is pleased to bring to it's readers. The opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily the opinions of the Newsletter Staff, Newsletter, or the Officers of the Mid-Florida Atari Computer Club.)

Sheldon owns and operates Computer STudio, a full-service Atari dealership in Asheville, North Carolina. Sheldon is also a registered architect (licensed in Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Colorado, as well as holding a National NCARB certificate). His current architectural drawings are, of course, prepared on his Atari TT030-based CADD system, using DynaCADD software.

As the "last market" though appeared to be thriving, and was showing no signs of slowing down, Atari's management realized that the only stores that were available to them to carry were the Atari computer stores that had been set up by Atari themselves. And, to top it off, Atari publicly announced more on Q3 that they would be discontinuing the 400 and 800 computers and that they were going to concentrate all of their efforts on the XL line. Dealers were pissed to make what is now a huge investment in Atari computers and then have Atari announce the discontinuation of the line a few months later. Even though Atari was still only available to Atari dealers in select markets, dealers were still making a profit from sales of the Jaguar to even cover the cost of their store. Atari's decision to discontinue the 400 and 800 computers left many dealers very unhappy.

The official announcement of the Jaguar came in January of 1993. But the news was leaked to the public a few months before that. Atari's decision not to launch the Jaguar at CES was disappointing to many dealers who had hoped to see the Jaguar at the show. Many dealers were also disappointed that Atari was not going to be releasing any new computers in the near future. Dealers were still making a profit from sales of the Jaguar to even cover the cost of their store. Atari's decision to discontinue the 400 and 800 computers left many dealers very unhappy.

When Atari announced that it would be releasing the Jaguar, it was also announcing that it would be releasing a more system upgrades for our computer customers. Atari's decision not to launch the Jaguar at CES was disappointing to many dealers who had hoped to see the Jaguar at the show. Many dealers were also disappointed that Atari was not going to be releasing any new computers in the near future. Dealers were still making a profit from sales of the Jaguar to even cover the cost of their store. Atari's decision to discontinue the 400 and 800 computers left many dealers very unhappy.

One major problem that Atari had in 1993 was that Atari was still in the business of selling computers. Atari's situation after Atari publicly announced the Jaguar was that Atari was still in the business of selling computers. Atari embarked on a program to phase out their existing dealership from selling Atari computers. Many dealers are no longer reimbursed for their time to perform warranty work and are no longer reimbursed for maintaining repair center parts inventory for existing Atari computers. Atari is also no longer providing dealers with additional dealership training programs for their customers.

When does this leave the typical Atari dealer? Many dealers are left with a huge inventory of Atari computers to dispose of. Many dealers are left with unwanted Atari service contracts to honor for their customers. Many dealers are left with unwanted Atari computers that they cannot sell. The current program requires that most dealers be restricted from selling Atari computers. Many dealers will be restricted with the loss of their revenue for 4-6 weeks or longer. For a small dealer, this can be a major problem. Many dealers already have given away to other platforms. Can you blame them for not wanting to continue providing "service" service?

Here at Computer Studio, we are not going to stop selling Atari computers. We've been selling Atari computers for many years, and we have many customers that we have developed a relationship with. We've seen many dealers come and go through the years. Many dealers were unable to maintain consistency or profitability in a level playing field on which to compete, and lost sight of their ability to meet the needs of people of product lines to meet customer demand. They also lost sight of the ability to attract a strong and loyal customer base. We also have a strong desire to maintain our ability to provide our customers with the ability to upgrade their computers to meet new and more powerful personal computers. We'll see. Atari computer owners are still able to enjoy many years to come.

Sincerely yours,

Computer Studio

Publisher of Atari Computer Shopper

Computer Studio

Publisher of Atari Computer Shopper

Computer Studio

Publisher of Atari Computer Shopper